

The evaluation of global partnership for development

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Abstract

Global partnership is the main challenge in Agenda 2030, this paper suggests a simple tool to evaluate the quality of partnership and in particular its evolution over time. The evaluation matrix is a double entry table which refers to a development program a country decides to implement. Each box in the table shows how much a partner can influence one of the activities of the program. The approach gives the possibility to assess the evolution of the quality of partnership through time and to see if there is a re-balancing of the decision power among the different stakeholders.

La partnership globale è la principale sfida dell'Agenda 2030, questo documento suggerisce uno strumento semplice per valutare la qualità della partnership e in particolare la sua evoluzione nel tempo. La matrice di valutazione è una tabella a doppia entrata che fa riferimento a un programma di sviluppo che un paese decide di attuare. Ogni box nella tabella mostra quanto un partner può influenzare una delle attività del programma. L'approccio offre la possibilità di valutare l'evoluzione della qualità del partenariato nel tempo e di vedere se vi è un riequilibrio del potere decisionale tra le diverse parti interessate.

Keywords

Cooperation, partnership, development, sustainable development goals.

Last but not least

Agenda 2030 presents many challenges, among them the great number of Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, and of Targets, 169(see UN 2015), with more than 232 indicators. Moreover the SDGs have a lot of interconnections and the distinction between goals and means is not always clear. More than everything else there are possible trade-offs between the several goals and targets, all this denotes a genuine difficulty in the management and achievement of the Agenda (see Fukuda Parr and Mc Neill 2019)

This is a first reason to focus on the last SDG, number 17, which reads:

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. (UN 2015).

Precisely because there are a lot goals and targets it is necessary to have a strong coordination of all possible partners. How can many different stakeholders coordinate in order to pursue such a variety of goals and targets?

A second good reason is the fact that Agenda 2030 is a work in progress, as the 2000 Millennium Development Goals were. It will be very difficult to achieve many of the most ambitious SDGs and Targets by 2030. Of course there are good policy reasons to set a series of very ambitious thresholds: zero poverty and zero hunger, to mention the first two SDGs. This should stimulate all partners to put a lot of effort in the achievement of the goals, but of course it also generates very bold expectations and it makes more difficult to achieve many targets. This is why it is of the utmost importance to use the SDGs in order to build strong long term partnerships which should last beyond 2030, whether or not each goal will be achieved.

SDG 17 is similar to Millennium Development Goal number 8 and it includes 19 targets and 25 indicators which are grouped into five main areas(see UN 2015):

- finance,
- technology,
- capacity building,
- trade,
- systemic issues.

The last area comprises three issues:

- policy and institutional coherence,
- multi-stakeholder partnership,
- data monitoring and accountability.

To organize real and decent partnerships in areas such as finance, technology and trade is a huge challenge. The decisions taken about the three areas will determine the future conditions of the economic and social relationships between the countries and the regions of the world. These three areas will shape the future of the four SDGs which have a more direct impact on the economic structures of countries. The four ‘structural’ SDGs are: number 12 about sustainable consumption and production systems, SDG 8 on full employment and decent work, SDG 9 on sustainable infrastructures, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities among and within countries. The evolution of the three areas and the four “structural” SDGs depends upon choices which have to be made now and which by and large concern both the type of investments to be done and the way to share their benefits. This will have a decisive impact on the possibility either to achieve all the other goals or at least to be on track to achieve them. Needless to say all this requires a lot of coordination at the multilateral level, but unfortunately we are in a period in which multilateralism is clearly under attack to the point of becoming irrelevant and nationalistic views are taking up again (see Gallagher and Kozul-Wright 2019).

Triangular cooperation

Capacity building and the three systemic issues in SDG 17 have directly to do with the implementation of partnership, a challenge already included in the MDGs. Problems related to the implementation of global partnership in development cooperation are not at all new and they have been widely explored in the several High Level Forums which have been taking place during the 2000s. From Rome 2003 to the Paris Declaration of 2005, until the First High-Level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation of 2014 in Mexico City and the second one of 2016 in Nairobi. This wide-ranging debate has led to some improvement in the organization of development cooperation when there is a variety of stakeholders.

Agenda 2030 makes several references to ‘triangular cooperation’. Target 17.9 reads:

Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South, and *triangular cooperation* (UN 2015, italics added).

Triangular cooperation is also mentioned in Indicator 17.9.1 and target 17.6 advocates for “triangular regional and international cooperation” in case of technology and innovations. Figure 1 provides a very simple illustration of triangular cooperation. There are now many more partners with respect to some decades ago, when the dominant picture was that of a direct relationship between a donor, traditionally an OECD-DAC government, and the developing country. There are several ‘new donors’ and partnership for development can assume several aspects and at least in principle there should be a coordination among all the partners from the decisions about the goals to the implementation of the development programs. In Figure the new triangular cooperation is described by the white arrows, while the black arrow stays for South-South cooperation.

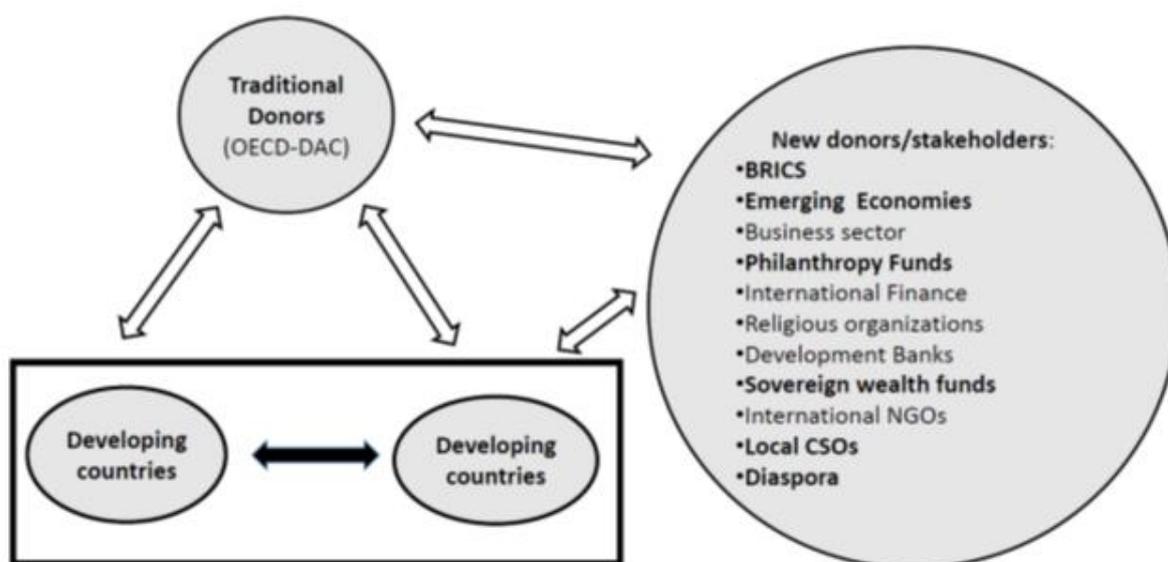


Figure 1. Triangular Cooperation, a simple description

In Agenda 2030 many targets focus on partnership and on the mobilization of financial resources. Target 17.17 aims to

encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships (UN 2015).

The very popular trio PPP, public-private partnership, can have different meanings depending on what is meant by ‘public’ and which are the private partners, which could be private business but also Civil Society Organisations, think tanks, migrants’ associations.

Global partnership is even more complicated if we include not only the partners, in the sense of the organizations which have a specific role in a program, but more in general the various stakeholders who have an interests in the initiative, but not necessarily an active role in it. Target 17.16 takes on a similar issue:

enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries” (UN 2015, italics added).

Whoever the partners and stakeholders a general problem which might emerge in all programs and policies is that of achieving a useful balance of power among all the partners. In development cooperation is quite easy to have partners with different skills and capacities and above all with very dissimilar financial means. Whatever we think of the new cooperation there are still large imbalances between those who have the money and those who are supposed to benefit from the activities. Global partnership requires a process of re-balancing of responsibilities and commitments among all the partners.

The Comprehensive Development Framework

The first decades of the new century have seen a lot of meetings on the problem of building an effective development partnership. It is useful to recall that also the final years of the last century were a period of vibrant debates in development policies. Since 1982 many developing countries have been hit by major foreign debt crisis which has led to the stagnation of income per capita in three major regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub Saharan Africa and Middle East and North Africa. and the Jubilee 2000 international campaign was asking for a solution An attempt to solve the problem came in 1996 from the World Bank with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, HIPC, initiative. The demand for debt cancellation was reinforced thanks to the activity of advocacy by Civil Society and by

the Jubilee 2000 campaign. In 1999 the Koln meeting of G7 countries led to the Enhanced HIPC and to a process of partial cancellation of the foreign debt of the poorest countries.

During those years the President of the World Bank James Wolfensohn and by the Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz gave an important contribution for a new approach to development partnership. Stiglitz gave two very important lectures one in January 1998 at WIDER in Helsinki on the “Post-Washington Consensus” (Stiglitz, 1998a), and the second in October of the same year on a similar topic at UNCTAD in Geneva (Stiglitz, 1998b). Out of those debates it also emerged a view of multi-stakeholder partnership which was presented by Wolfensohn in January 1999, when he put forward “A Proposal for a Comprehensive Development Framework” (see Wolfensohn 1999).[i]

The Comprehensive Development Framework, CDF, was based on four inter-related principles:[ii]

- long-term holistic vision,
- country ownership,
- partnership,
- focus on development results.

These principles became part of the Millennium Goals and then of Agenda 2030. The CDF is a tool which should help to clarify the roles and the responsibilities of the different partners in a development program. The idea is that having a CDF Matrix, a double entry table where the activities to be implemented are indicated on the horizontal axis and the various partners are listed on the vertical axis; one of the original matrixes of the CDF is in Figure 2 (see Wolfensohn 1999, 32).

THE PREREQUISITES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION															
		Structural				Human		Physical				Specific Strategies			
		(1) Good and Clean Governance	(2) Justice System	(3) Financial System	(4) Social Safety Net and Social Programs	(5) Education and Knowledge Institutions	(6) Health and Population	(7) Water and Sewerage	(8) Energy	(9) Roads, Transportation and Telecommunications	(10) Environmental and Cultural Issues	(11) Rural Strategy	(12) Urban Strategy	(13) Private Sector Strategy	(14) (Country Specific Headings)
THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	Government - National - Provincial - Local														
	Multilateral and Bilateral Institutions														
	Civil Society														
	Private Sector														

Figure 2. A CDF matrix

The horizontal axis has a very broad title “The Prerequisites for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Alleviation”, which are organized into four sub-headings, Structural, Human, Physical, Specific Strategies. The four groups are meant to cover the main aspects of sustainable human development. We do not find an explicit mention of the environmental aspect but we must remember that the approach dates back to a period in which income poverty, as measured by the so called extreme poverty threshold[iii], was an acute problem in many developing countries and it will become the first of the Millennium Goals. The four groups include the major areas of intervention of the program such as: Governance, Justice, Financial System, Social Safety Net, Education, Health, Energy, Urban Strategy, Country Specific Heading.[iv]

The matrix can be adapted to the needs and peculiarities of the different countries both for what concerns the actors involved and also for the definition of the “prerequisites”. The boxes inside the matrix describe which actors are more suited to take care of a certain area. The columns tell us how many partners contribute to a specific area, while the rows show in how many different areas each partner is involved. The aim of the CDF is to identify the different roles and responsibilities of the partners in each area. The matrix may also help to single out which partner can have a leading role in each area and it also describes the possible interactions among the different partners. A final point worth noticing is the insistence of the CDF approach on the notion of country ownership and country-led partnership (see also World Bank 2004).

Evaluating partnership

Multi-stakeholder partnership must be a form of ‘policy dialogue’ otherwise it is not a true partnership. This fact implies a major economic, social and political ‘policy space’ for developing countries, in particular for the least developed one, policy space is mentioned in target 17.15. Policy space must allow developing countries to implement policies which do not necessarily follow the standard recommendations of the international organizations. Consider industrial policies and support for export sectors, the management of the financial account and of the exchange rate, the budgetary and fiscal policies in general. It is clear that low income countries cannot adapt to the same rules which are applied to high income countries and to newly industrialized economies.

Special and Differential Treatment, SDT, for Low and Lower Middle Income countries is mentioned in target 10.a of Agenda 2030(UN 2015: 21). SDT takes into account the differences in income per capita and it is linked to the two principles of universality and differentiation: the SDGs are for all countries and for partners, but there are different possibility to finance and to support them. Global partnership requires a major re-balancing of the negotiating capacities between high income and low income countries (more in Vaggi 2018 chapter 6. section 3).

However, decisions about goals and targets have to be taken and activities to be carried out even if the initial conditions are such that some partners are much more influential than others. The problem is not so much the existence of a balanced influence of all the partners on the various activities at the beginning of a development program, but whether or not during the implementation of the program the ability of the partners to interact and to share decisions improves. Indicator 17.16.1 reads:

Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals. (UN 2015)

This paper suggests a very simple tool to evaluate the quality of partnership and in particular its evolution over time. Consider a country, A, which decides to pursue one of the SDGs, x, but it could also be one of its targets. We are at the beginning of the program, or policy, dedicated to achieve that goal/target thus it is the first year of the program, let us suppose it corresponds to year 2020. We can draw a double entry table, or matrix, whose horizontal axis has the description of all the activities, a, b, c, ..., required to implement the program. The various partners, 1, 2, 3, ..., among which it is possible to include also other stakeholders, are along the vertical axis. Figure 3 gives a very simple description of the evaluation matrix, which looks similar to that described in the CDF, but in fact there are three major differences.

First, the CDF matrix takes a very broad view of the development challenges of a country and considers very important areas, the evaluation matrix has much more modest purpose. Each evaluation matrix refers to a specific development program or goal which is part of one of the four clusters of the CDF matrix. For example a country can decide to have a program on secondary education for all, a goal which is part of the “human” cluster and inside it of the education area. The evaluation matrix describes the activities in which a program is structured in order to reach a certain goal or a target. Thus the boxes show the possible actions of the different partners on all the activities and their interconnections.

Second, inside each box there is now a number which illustrate how much each partner can influence that specific activity, how much power she has on it and what is the control that she can exert on the implementation and the outcome of the activity. Power is meant to describe the possibility of partner ‘1’ to influence activity ‘a’ and so on. Power can be split into two components. First, power refers the possibility of deciding which activities should be considered, let us call this possibility ‘choice’. Second, there is the power to decide how to implement the activity, call this power ‘action’.

Activities Partners	a	b	c	d
1				
2				
3				
4				

Figure 3. The evaluation matrix

Country A, Goal/Target x, Year 2020

Below it is a simple grading system to assess the influence that each partner can exert on each activity. Take for example partner ‘1’, the numbers from 1 to 5 indicate a growing influence and each figure corresponds to different choice and action.

1. Little choice: partner 1 can indicate some activities and some specific tools on how to implement each activity, but takes no decisions about them.
2. More choice-Some action: partner 1 can suggest the inclusion of some activities and share decisions about their implementation, for example she has a decision power of around 25%.
3. Significant action: partner 1 can suggest the inclusion of all the activities and some tools and share decision about them, decision power of around 50%.
4. Principal action: partner 1 can indicate all activities, all the tools and take decision about them, decision power of around 75%.
5. Dominant action: partner 1 decides everything, in the luckiest case we can regard it as the ‘benevolent dictator’ option.

The percentage used are simple examples and they could range from 0 to 100.

The evaluation matrix allows to assess the power of each partner on each activity.

The third difference with CDF consists in the fact that the above table refers to a specific year and the most interesting thing is to see how the numbers in the boxes change through time. We must build a series of similar tables at different periods of time, say after 5, 10, 15 years, if we start in 2020, tables could be provided for each following year, or at least for 2025, 2030 and so on. Suppose that for a specific goal, there is an initial situation in which

partner 1, a powerful international donor, is full of 4 and 5 for all the activities, while the other partners, in particular the local ones, have mainly 0 or 1. If after 5 years the situation is similar we can say that global partnership has not progressed. In this case the matrix helps to identify in which activities there has been less progress in partnership. If on the contrary in year 5 we have a matrix with a lot of 3 and 4 and in particular the local partners move from low figures to higher ones we can say that on that specific goal/target partnership has improved. There has been a re-balancing of the decision power among the partners. Clearly there can be a lot of intermediate situations and the most interesting evaluation will be at the end of the program.

Three final comments. First, the grading system allows the possibility to evaluate how much each partner has a voice in the identification of the activities, because it could well be that during the implementation of the program new activities might have to be introduced and old ones abandoned. It is important to understand how these decisions are taken and shared. Second, each activity could be further divided into sub-activities depending on the specific characteristics of the development program.

Third, the evaluation matrix can be applied to any development program and not just to the SDGs and their targets, provided it lasts for a number of years; the approach applies to long-run programs and policies.

Conclusion. Development is long-run, so partnership should be

Some final points. First, this simple methodology does not focus on whether or not the goal/target has been achieved. It could well be the case that the goal or target has not been achieved in full, because of either unexpected events or the underestimation of its difficulties, as it has happened with some Millennium Development Goals. Nonetheless the partners have built a stronger and more cooperative and balanced method of working together which could be useful in the future. Of course the development effectiveness of the program is important, but the evaluation matrix is a tool for assessing the quality of the partnership which complements the traditional monitoring and evaluation methods.

Second, sustainable development, in all its three dimension, economic, social and environmental, is a long-run process, while unfortunately many projects and programs are short to medium-term, say 3 to 6 years. The above evaluation of partnership can also be used to assess short-run projects when they are part of a long-term policy and the partners do not change too much. The table can also be used backward in case of policies and programs which have already started, provided there are sensible information about the ‘voice’ and the ‘action’ of the different partners in the past.

This leads us to the third point; global partnership requires a long-term commitment and some sort of stability and mutual obligation among the partners. Many of the stakeholders mentioned in Figure 1 already have this type of long-term commitment. The so called cooperation point to point and de-centralized cooperation activities of local communities, for instance municipalities, in the ‘north’ which ‘adopt’ situation in the ‘south’. The same is true for technology transfer and joint research programs. Civil Society Organization too tend to invest for many years in certain countries and into some types of programs. The main donor

countries and the big international and private organizations should more and more organize their cooperation and financial instruments in order to support this long-term collaboration and partnerships.

2030 is not that far away, some of the SGDs will be achieved others will not. The evaluation matrix is a modest tool which aims at improving the quality of global partnership for sustainable development in view of 2030 and beyond.

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[i]For the CDF original proposal see:

http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01013/WEB/0_CO-87.HTM

See also the paper by Joseph Stiglitz on February 27, 1999-: *Participation and Development: Perspectives from the Comprehensive Development Paradigm*.

[ii] There is a CDF website http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01013/WEB/0_CON-3.HTM

[iii] In the 2000 MDGs this is the famous 1 dollar a day poverty line, which now it has been moved to 1,90 dollars; on the story of this notion see Ravallion M., Chen, S. and Sangraula P. (2009).

[iv] In the original CDF proposal there is also a much simpler matrix (see Wolfensohn 1999, p. 22).